

THE
**FUTURE
OF
AMERICA'S
NATIONAL
PARKS**

First Annual
Centennial Strategy for

Death Valley National Park

August 2007

CENTENNIAL INITIATIVE



Site: DEVA

Year: 2007

Vision Statement

Death Valley National Park utilizes innovative and interactive educational efforts to enhance visitor understanding and appreciation, while engaging the interest of the American and International public in learning about and participating in the preservation of the park's natural and cultural resources and its intangible inspirational values. The park serves as a preeminent resource laboratory through partnerships with local, regional, and national schools and universities that focus on applying science and scholarship in the study of preservation, and management of the park's cultural and natural resources. Death Valley is a leader in using sustainable design, materials, equipment, and practices that contribute to global conservation and environmental responsibility. Visitor experiences are enhanced by providing access to areas for solitary contemplation, exploration, and recreation. Death Valley demonstrates model leadership, management, and partnership practices through a workforce that reflects the changing and diverse face of America.

Park/ Superintendent/ Program Manager

James T. Reynolds/Karen A. Stoll

Site: DEVA

STEWARDSHIP

☒ Provide inspiring, safe, and accessible places for people to enjoy - the standard to which all other park systems aspire.

☒ Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

Thousands of abandoned mine structures within Death Valley stand as reminders of the rich economic heritage and diverse cultural history of the park and the Mojave Desert. These complex cultural landscapes are extremely popular with the visiting public. They are, however, often characterized by deep open shafts, unstable tunnels and adits, and deteriorated ruins. Adding to the danger are unsafe chemicals and piles of potentially harmful equipment and debris. To ensure the safety of visitors to these sites, the park will continue its Abandoned Mine Lands (AML) program. By mitigating the hazards posed by unsafe mine openings and features, the park can concentrate on new and innovative ways of presenting the park's 150-year-long mining history to the public. Initial sites addressed will include the Keane Wonder and Skidoo mines, as well as properties in the Greenwater Valley and Furnace Creek Wash. Rio Tinto Minerals, inc., will partner with the park on safeing many of the early borax properties.

☒ The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Site: DEVA

STEWARDSHIP

☒ **Improve the condition of park resources and assets.**

☒ **Rehabilitate high-priority historic buildings to good condition, and help communities to preserve their history through programs like Preserve America.**

The park is proposing establishment of a preservation support and training facility at Scotty's Castle. This facility, located in the original stables building, would include visible museum storage as well as preservation treatment/conservation work space and a shop for preservation maintenance of architectural features. Training in historic preservation and curatorial conservation techniques would be provided to park staff and other network personnel through partnerships with entities such as the University of Vermont, the University of Nevada--Las Vegas, and the Historic Preservation Training Center. Although initial training and preservation work would focus on projects within the Scotty's Castle complex, the park has hundreds of other cultural resources that could be stabilized and/or restored through this preservation training program. In order to present a variety of training experiences, work in other network parks would be undertaken as appropriate. This facility would provide a venue to showcase NPS curatorial and architectural preservation techniques and would greatly add to visitor understanding and appreciation of the park's cultural resources and their needs.

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☒ **Restore native habitats by controlling invasive species and reintroducing key plant and animal species.**

The park is attempting to restore numbers of two endemic species at Eureka Dunes --the Eureka Dunes evening-primrose and the Eureka Valley dunegrass, which are very close to being eligible for delisting. Projects to reduce the effects of OHV use include installing interpretive signs, bollards, and wilderness boundary markers; performing restoration on damaged areas; increasing park presence and visitor education opportunities; and monitoring populations of listed plants.

The exotic vegetation control program in the park strives to contain or eliminate non-native species or populations of invasive plants, with the goal of environmental restoration, through education, prevention, and mechanical and chemical control techniques.

The world's only population of Devils Hole Pupfish survives in a limestone cavern called Devils Hole in Nevada. It has the smallest habitat of any vertebrate in the world. Because of a declining population due to unknown causes, the park is striving to recover the population through supplemental feeding, propagation, and long-term research and monitoring.

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Site: DEVA

STEWARDSHIP

☒ **Improve the condition of park resources and assets.**

☒ **Improve high-priority assets to acceptable condition, as measured by the Facility Condition Index.**

Continue to improve 250 miles of paved, and 1000 miles of non paved roads to ensure all construction and repair meet NPS policy statement to ensure this work is sensitive to natural and cultural resources, reflect the highest principles of park design, and enhance the visitor experiences.

Continue to improve all Park Water Systems that meets or exceeds State and Federal standards of quality and ensure these systems are reliable and safe for visitors and employees.

The Furnace Creek Visitor Center is a Mission 66 facility with significant character-defining features of that era. Its rehabilitation will ensure it remains an icon of NPS history while maintaining its role as the primary information station for the park visitor. State-of-the-art, interactive exhibits will engage the American public and the international traveler in learning more about the resources of Death Valley.

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☒ **Improve the natural resources in parks, as measured by the vital signs developed under the Natural Resource Challenge.**

Death Valley NP is an active member of the Mojave Network Inventory and Monitoring program. We have participated in the past and will continue to participate in setting monitoring goals and developing a monitoring program, summarizing existing information on the park's natural resources, and identifying the most significant resources, resource concerns, and issues across the network. We are also helping in the formulation of an ecological context and conceptual model framework for the Mojave-Great Basin ecosystems. We have selected vital signs for monitoring and are developing measurable monitoring objectives, are continuing to refine conceptual ecological models, are writing protocol development summaries, and are "mining" existing datasets.

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☒ **Complete all cultural resource inventories for designated priority resources.**

Thousands of abandoned mines within the park illustrate more than 150 years of mining history within Death Valley and the Mojave Desert. Although they are prime visitor attractions, these sites are often unsafe due to the presence of unprotected adits and shafts and potentially hazardous materials left on site. The park has an active Abandoned Mine Lands (AML) program whose goal is to make these sites, which are often significant cultural resources

Site: DEVA

STEWARDSHIP

☒ Improve the condition of park resources and assets.

and important wildlife habitat, safe for visitor access. The cultural resource aspect of the AML program consists of inventorying mining sites, assessing features and structures left on site, and evaluating them in terms of eligibility for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. This program ensures that the park is in compliance with EO 11593 in terms of inventorying and evaluating sites of potential historical significance. The park will also add these complex and interesting cultural landscapes to existing national databases.

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Site: DEVA

STEWARDSHIP

☒ Serve as the Preeminent resource laboratory by applying excellence in science and scholarship to understand and respond to environmental changes.

☒ Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

The All-Taxa Biodiversity Inventory (Multi-Region II) is designed to build on local efforts, providing for the engagement of the public in new discoveries within parks and developing the first nationally representative, scientifically credible tool to measure the health and resilience of US parks. It will make NPS the national and global leader in biodiversity conservation. The Ocean Initiative and Global Climate Change proposal would establish an exhibit at Shark Reef Aquarium at Mandalay Bay Resort, Las Vegas, illustrating the global connection between oceans and deserts. The educational value of this one-of-a-kind aquarium exhibit is in providing a way for kids of all ages to make the important connection between the oceans and deserts and in forging connections with a public not otherwise reached by traditional methods. Develop a partnership with DEVA Natural History Association, California and Nevada Universities and Rio Tinto Minerals to develop a Science and Learning Center at Historic Ryan Camp. Ryan Camp is presently an abandoned US Borax company town whose history is inexplicitly tied to Death Valley's mining history

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Site: DEVA

STEWARDSHIP

☒ Encourage children to be future conservationists.

☒ Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

Expand on the partnership with the California Learning Center in Los Angeles and with Santa Monica Mountains NRA that will enable young inner city children to experience a true natural wilderness experience, use park resources as an outdoor and onsite classroom, and introduce them to job and life style alternatives before unknown to them.

Expand the partnership with the Outward Bound Adventures, Los Angeles Chapter and support the "Share The Earth, Challenge A Child" Program.

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Site: DEVA

ENVIRONMENT

☒ **Reduce environmental impacts of park operations.**

☒ **Reduce the environmental impacts of park operations on air and water quality.**

The park will continue to pursue planning and development objectives that have the least environmental impact. We will continue to inventory and assess springs, seeps, and other important water resources and monitor the effects of up-gradient water withdrawals on them. We will continue to design and build updated water collection and distribution systems that provide safe drinking water while returning the most water possible to significant riparian areas. We will partner with the Timbisha Shoshone Tribe to maintain significant wetland and riparian areas (and other environmentally sensitive areas within the park)in a manner that provides a safe, clean habitat for plant and animal species, that maintains the growth of plants important to the tribe for traditional cultural uses, and that meets park fire management objectives. DEVA's Fire Management Plan will include standards to ensure the protection of water and air quality, and other natural and cultural resources. Centennial funds will increase protection ranger positions and increase backcountry patrols to expand resource protection, and help to inventory and monitor 3.2 million acres of wilderness.

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☒ **Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)**

Death Valley National Park has some of the darkest skies in the world. The park is seeking nomination as an International Night Sky Park. The park and its partners will demonstrate that with energy efficient bulbs and night sky friendly fixtures, visitor and employee safety and security can be obtained while preserving the vast wilderness of the night skies.

The park will develop and demonstrate the essential need and effectiveness of Re-Cycling through an active re-cycling program in its everyday operations and in all public locations. Education through personal and non-personal contacts will help coach the visiting public to carry re-cycling beyond the park boundaries.

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Site: DEVA

ENVIRONMENT

☒ Inspire an environmental conscience in Americans.

☒ Demonstrate environmental excellence through increased use of alternative energy and fuels at every park.

Continue to request that GSA provides parks with vehicles that use alternative fuels, and revise their rental terms to be more reasonable and less expensive. DEVA will also expand efforts to persuade the National Park Foundation to improve the "Proud Partner" Program such that more alternative fuel vehicles will be donated to parks.

Expand relations with the many automobile companies that use DEVA to test vehicles and determine if they are willing to donate alternative fuel vehicles to the NPS.

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Site: DEVA

ENVIRONMENT

☒ Engage partners, communities, and visitors in shared environmental stewardship.

☒ Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

Install photovoltaic (PV) systems throughout the park to reduce our annual energy demand. Several projects such as our current partnership SBC to install a 50kW PV system (provide 30-50% of current demand) for the Furnace Creek Visitor Center and the PV system to reduce the electrical demand to operate the Furnace Creek Water Management System. We will expand our partnership with the Death Valley History Association, and other partners to provide PV systems at the Stovepipe Wells Ranger Station and at other locations throughout the park.

Partner with other parks in the Mojave Network of parks to develop partnerships with SBC, oil companies, colleges, foundations, and associations to develop a PV system that will serve several parks and help to reduce energy demands.

Expand our partnerships with 4X4 vehicle clubs, environmental groups, counties, cities and other groups to better protect the resources of Death Valley National Park, the largest national park outside of Alaska, 3.4 million acres.

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Site: DEVA

RECREATION

☒ Establish "volun-tourism" excursions to national parks for volunteers to help achieve natural and cultural resource protection goals.

☒ Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

The park will continue to use the Alternative Spring Break Initiative, in cooperation with partner schools, universities and network learning centers, to encourage greater participation in invigorating outdoor activities. Through exploration and management of park resources, a new generation of park users and managers will gain a better appreciation for the park's value to the world.

Groups such as the Sierra Club, Elder Hostel, Outward Bound Adventures, and even special interest organizations like 4-wheel drive clubs have been enjoying national parks for a long time. Dozens of large and small restoration, rehabilitation, and monitoring projects in developed and wilderness areas will be accomplished through cooperative or VIP agreements with groups such as these to meet the park's resource protection goals and encourage volun-tourism.

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Site: DEVA

RECREATION

☒ Expand partnerships with schools and boys and girls associations to show how national park experiences can improve children's lives.

☒ Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

As urban areas continue to grow, a greater population of young adults is growing up without ever venturing beyond the concrete walls and paved streets of cities. A new partnership with the California Learning Center in Los Angeles and Santa Monica Mountains NRA will enable young inner city children to experience a true natural wilderness experience and introduce them to job and life style alternatives before unknown to them.

Death Valley will become a true park classroom for these young people with the aid of donors and partner groups who will assist in assuring transportation and camping equipment needs of these schools and young students.

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Site: DEVA

RECREATION

☒ Focus national, regional, and local tourism efforts to reach diverse audiences and young people and to attract visitors to lesser-known parks.

☒ Increase visitation by 25 percent at lesser-known parks through a national tourism effort aimed at helping people to discover the breadth of parks and experiences.

The park has been a partner in an Interagency Visitor Center for over 30 years providing minimal support. The result of recent work with all partners has produced a new visitor center in Lone Pine, California. With the aid of Centennial base increases the park will be able to provide seasonal staffing for this facility. The presence of an NPS employee will allow for greater distribution of information about some of the lesser visited park units in and around Death Valley NP.

In cooperation with the Death Valley 49ers, a partner organization with over 50 years of history with Death Valley National Park, the park will work with them to encourage a younger more diverse audience to explore and experience the natural and cultural history of Death Valley and surrounding national park units.

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☒ Increase the number of visitors that attend ranger-facilitated programs such as campfire talks, hikes, and school programs.

The Centennial Initiative is providing Death Valley National Park with a much needed infusion of new seasonal staff. The large size of Death Valley and minimal staffing limited the number of opportunities for visitors to interact with a real park ranger. Increases in seasonal park staffing will allow for backcountry guided hikes and evening programs in remote campgrounds such as Eureka Dunes, Mesquite Springs and Wildrose. North District interpretative opportunities for visitors will include new tour routes of other buildings in the Scotty's Castle Historic District.

Outreach efforts will put rangers in more classrooms in local and regional area schools and provide for increased field trip activities within the park.

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Site: DEVA

EDUCATION

☒ Cooperate with educators to provide curriculum materials, high-quality programs, and park-based and online learning.

☒ Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

Curriculum based programs are being developed based on state standards set for California and Nevada. Additionally, many of the programs are being developed with Resource Management to assist in the accumulation of much needed park data. Students will learn scientific research and monitoring techniques, as well as fun facts about the park resources. The park will also be adding valuable resource data to its bank of information that will lead to wiser management decisions in the future. Students through active participation not only learn about park resources during their trips to the park, they also gain a better appreciation and buy-in to protect parks as they see their work go toward the park's management.

Increased efforts will be made to prepare students for coming to the park as part of a school field trip or on a trip with their families. A Classroom Junior Ranger book is being developed in cooperation with local teachers. It will be patterned after the well known Junior Ranger books found in most parks today, but the activities will be curriculum based.

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Site: DEVA

EDUCATION

☒ **Introduce young people and their families to national parks by using exciting media and technology.**

☒ **Increase the number of web hits through the introduction of advanced, interactive features that attract young people to national parks.**

As much as we would like all children to come and experience Death Valley National Park in person, we know this is not possible. The park will expand its E-Field Trip programs (a web-based interactive program on park resources that allows kids from anywhere in the world interact with the program and actually correspond with rangers in the park). The kid's and teacher's section of the park web site will be expanded to include new interactive activities, school project assistance pages, and many curriculum based projects.

Partnerships with local broadcast stations and web providers will allow for live web broadcasts from remote areas of the park or allow students to interact with park staff during special resource projects such as dive counts of the rare and endangered Devils Hole pupfish.

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☒ **Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)**

Increased efforts to prepare students for coming to the park as part of a school field trip or on a trip with their families, a Classroom Junior Ranger book is being developed in cooperation with local teachers. It will be patterned after the well known Junior Ranger books found in most parks today, but the activities will be curriculum based.

An alternative to attending ranger conducted walks is called the GPS Ranger. A self-paced I-pod device with a built-in GPS unit will guide visitors along the more popular tour routes in the park. Video, historic photos, graphs, text and interactive segments will allow visitors an opportunity to take in as much or as little information as they want as they explore the park on their own.

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Site: DEVA

EDUCATION

☒ Promote life-long learning to connect generations through park experiences.

☒ Enroll an additional two million children in the Junior Ranger program.

The preservation of our national parks lies in our young people. They will become the park's future supporters and managers. But only if they are prepared scholastically, emotionally, and spiritually today to take on the responsibility. Death Valley is dedicated to increasing opportunities for young people to learn and get involved with national parks. These efforts include: Increased efforts to prepare students for coming to the park as part of a school field trip or on a trip with their families, a Classroom Junior Ranger book is being developed in cooperation with local teachers. It will be patterned after the well known Junior Ranger books found in most parks today, but the activities will be curriculum based. A web-based Junior Ranger activity section will allow students anywhere to become Death Valley Jr. Rangers. As the park increases its efforts to get families to travel to Death Valley, ranger-led Junior Ranger programs will become a regular part of ranger activities.

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Site: DEVA

EDUCATION

☒ Impart to every American a sense of their citizen ownership of their national parks.

☒ Increase visitors' satisfaction, understanding, and appreciation of the parks they visit.

There is no better way to learn than by hands-on experience. There is no better way to gain a greater appreciation and understanding of something than to interact with it. New exhibits in the park visitor center will incorporate a variety of interactive components (high-tech interactive computer based exhibits, hands-on manual devices that illustrate a function or role of the natural or cultural resources of the park). A good example is an interactive exhibit that illustrates how the seismic activities within the park and those yet to come, have shaped visitor's experience today.

As more people explore the millions of acres of backcountry at Death Valley, more visitors become exposed to the hazards of thousands of abandoned mines. Special exhibits, brochures and ranger conducted walks will be developed to provide valuable safety messages about mine hazards while encouraging them to explore the rich mining history of the park.

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Site: DEVA

PROFESSIONALISM

☒ **Be one of the top 10 places to work in America.**

☒ **Meet 100 percent of diversity recruitment goals by employing people who reflect the face of America.**

Death Valley National Park will research and identify organizations plus use park resources to recruit, develop and retain a diverse workforce that represents the faces of America and the region.

Expand the partnerships with Cooperative Ecosystem Study Units, universities, and culturally and ethnically diverse groups to identify students for summer and winter internships.

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☒ **Attain the highest employee satisfaction rate of all federal agencies, as measured by Office of Personnel Management surveys.**

Death Valley National Park will enhance its park intake program for lower graded staff to develop skills, using all available training methods to better prepare them for present work assignments. The program will also provide learning opportunities to satisfy future career advancing goals.

Death Valley's Management Team will continue their goals: 1. strengthen the management team, 2. enhance leadership skills training and review of team activities, 3. expand team building and coaching activities, 4. promote cooperative park leadership, and 5. promote senior management team effectiveness. These efforts will help the senior management team to model the highest qualities of leadership.

DEVA will continue to develop programs to promote employee wellness and fitness, and family life support with emphasis on youth and family activities.

☐ The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Site: DEVA

PROFESSIONALISM

☒ Use strategic planning to promote management excellence.

☒ Establish a structured professional development curriculum to provide park managers with the skills to apply best business practices and superior leadership.

The superintendent of Death Valley will coordinate and lead a team to develop and implement a management succession program for the Pacific West Region. This program will be patterned after the review of several fortune 500 companies, and leadership training experts. The program includes participant assessments, review of skills needed to become an effective manager and leader and identifying sources to gain these competencies, place participants of the program in a pool from which PWR selecting officials will use to assign participants to details, shadow assignments, and placement in management and leadership positions. This program will serve as a model for other regions as well as for the NPS to adopt. Our leadership and management workforce is aging, and the PWR must have employees prepared to assume the roles of these soon to retire managers.

The DEVA Superintendent has also been assigned to work with the Service's Training and Development community to revamp the "New Superintendents" Training and development course. This course could be a major element for the PWR Management Succession Program.

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☒ Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

Enhance the DEVA Intake Program as identified in attaining the highest employee satisfaction. Develop and establish off-campus training for NPS staff (i.e. natural and cultural resources preservation, interpretation); Ryan Camp Science/Learning and Educational Center as identified in the stewardship goal. Support the Mojave Network Team Concept for sharing and the professionalization of Information Technology staffs, Procurement and Contracting staffs, and other staffs (e.g. MojaveNetwork Safety Coalition, Servicing Personnel Office sharing of staffs).

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Site: DEVA

PROFESSIONALISM

☒ Promote a safety and health culture for all employees and visitors.

☒ Reduce the number of employee lost-time incidents and serious visitor injuries by 20 percent.

DEVA's Mission-safety is a condition of employment and employees are responsible for their own safety as well as others. We strive to prevent all safety incidents and management will support and provide a safe and healthful environment for employees and visiting public.

Our Safety Committee is an advocate and resource for all employees to ensure a sustainable behavior based safety program. So we may enhance the managers role, we will introduce the Safety Training Observation Program (STOP) for supervisors. This additional tool will help staff improve their auditing skills that will help in preventing injuries and incidents.

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Site: DEVA

PROFESSIONALISM

☒ Make national parks the first choice in philanthropic giving among those concerned about environmental, cultural, and recreational values.

☒ Improve communications and marketing capacity to increase public understanding of our mission, opportunities, and benefits.

DEVA is developing a nonprofit Friends Raising Effort to develop fund sources to support a variety of park resource improvement opportunities (e.g. Scotty's Castle Fund, Mining History Fund, Education Fund, and other funds to support park activities).

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